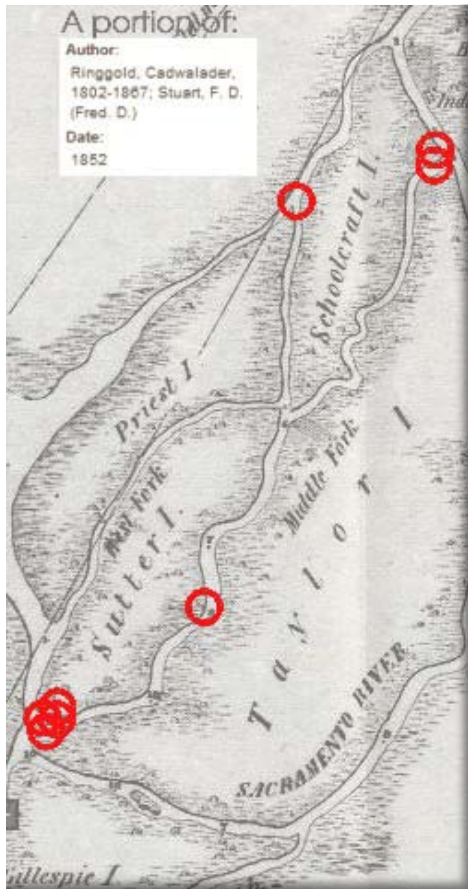


SHIPWRECKS ON STEAMBOAT SLOUGH OF THE SACRAMENTO DELTA REGION 1848 TO 1900



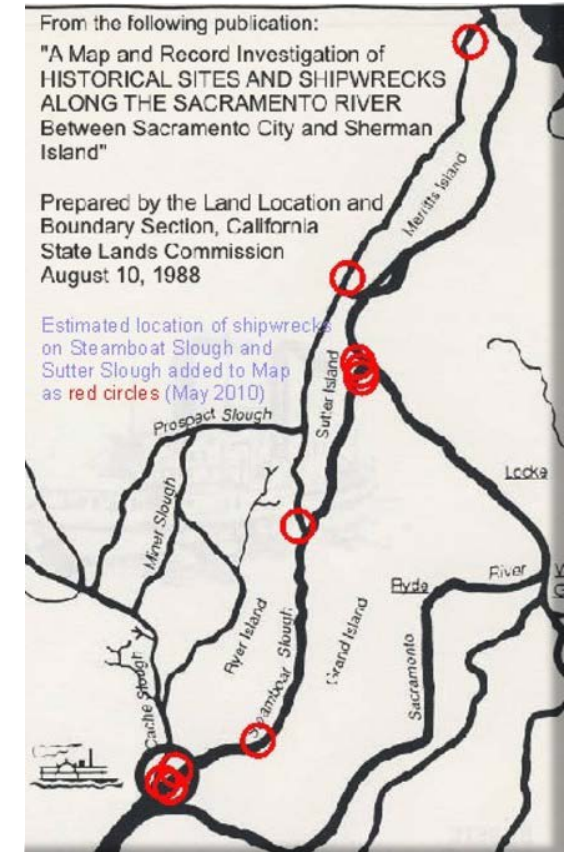
In 1848, the waterway we now call Steamboat Slough was referred to as the "Middle Fork" of the Sacramento River. Some non-official maps record the name "West Branch". Other records show Steamboat Slough was the preferred travel route, as opposed to the "old river" Sacramento River, because Steamboat was 8 miles shorter and several hours less travel by steamship to Sacramento. Islands bordering the Middle Fork in 1848 were Sutter, Schoolhouse and Taylor. However, due to silting from hydraulic mining slickens, by the late 1870's Steamboat Slough was less traveled by the larger steamers, yet still the preferred route for flat bottomed boats that would stop at the landings on Steamboat Slough to pick up fresh produce and drop off building supplies like bricks.

By 1868, Taylor Island was renamed Grand Island. Schoolcraft was renamed to Sutter Island, and former Sutter and Priest Islands were combined into Ryer Island as we know it today. A natural island within Steamboat Slough, called "Hogsback Shoal", located about 4.5 miles north of the convergence of Cache and Steamboat as noted by official surveyor Cadwalader Ringgold starting in 1850, was sold by the state to G.W. Blake, a Sacramento area builder, in 1878. By 1935, Ryer and Grand Island levees had been improved, the zig zag sections of Steamboat Slough had been mellowed out, and land that *may have been* a portion of Hog's Back Shoal became part of the peninsula called "Martin's Island" and later "Snug Harbor" by the 1960's. Due to the waterway and island name changes, careful attention must be paid to the exact years of the shipwrecks and the island names associated with the shipwreck at that time.

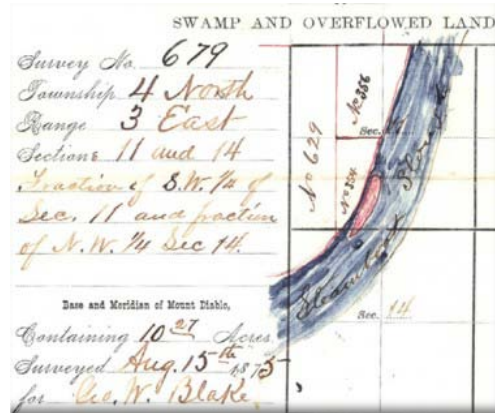
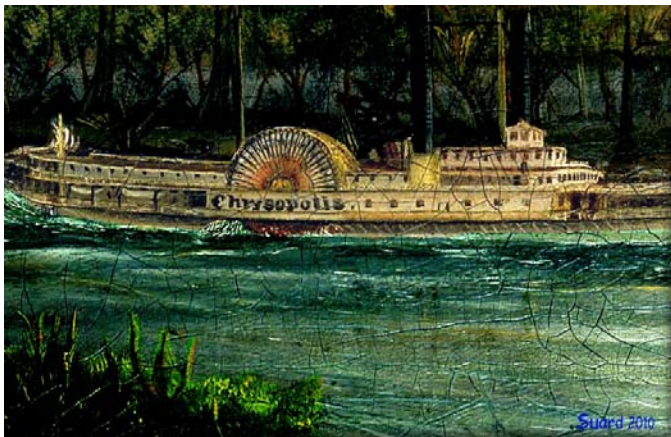
The larger ships usually traveled through Steamboat Slough at night. However, author A.J. Hutchings wrote in 1862 of a daytime trip through Steamboat Slough, and he noted the signs of farming and "husbandry" along both sides of the slough, and the "snug Little Cabins" tucked away behind the trees along the banks. Logs kept by the State of California show there were at least 25 landings or ferry stops along Steamboat Slough between 1850 and 1880, on Grand, Ryer and Sutter Islands, Grand being the most populated of the three. Dr. Ryer has been noted in

local history resources as being an astute engineer and innovator of levee footings, when he oversaw the improvements to Ryer Island levees; hence Ryer Island levees are believed to have more stable levee footings than some other Delta islands. When the "project levees" were built using federal funding, dredging from Steamboat Slough helped to further reinforce the levees of all the islands along this waterway. Ryer Island in particular has not suffered a flood since Dr. Ryer did levee improvements.

References and research: Newspapers of the period: The Alta California, The Sacramento Union, the Sacramento Bee.; "Paddle Wheel Days in California" by Jerry MacMullen 1944; Delta King and Queen; "A Map and Record Investigation of Historical Sites and Shipwrecks Along the Sacramento River Between Sacramento City and Sherman Island" by the Land Location and Boundary Section of California State Lands Commission, 1988; "Steamboats That Have from Time to Time Been Running from San Francisco to Sacramento", 1859, Hutchings; Chapter titled "Scenes along the Way" from Hutchings Yosemite book from 1862.and several other resources. "Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity" by A.J. Hutchings, 1862.



Ship name	Date & details	References
Wasp	January 12, 1965. A sloop. Sank in Steamboat Slough carrying cobbles and brick. Sailing down Steamboat Slough from Freeport.	CSLC, page 19
Bianca	October 1854. A schooner. Cache Creek near Steamboat. 80-100 tons of assorted cargo	CSLC, page 19
Fanny Ann	November 9, 1868. propeller boat. Grain.	
F.W. Crawford	July 30, 1868. A sloop. Traveling from Sacramento to San Francisco via Steamboat Slough. Brick and other cargo	Sacramento Union and CSLC, page 63
Nevada	February 7, 1862. Paddle wheeler/steamer. Racing with New World headed towards Sacramento from Rio Vista. Sunk at mouth of Steamboat Slough at Cache	Paddle-Wheel Days of California
Pet	March 10, 1870. Steamer headed to Sacramento from Rio Vista. Sunk in Steamboat Slough	CSLC, page 89
Eclipse	March 1, 1873. Barge wrecked near the bank of Steamboat Slough. Towed to a point near Hogs Back. Reference to use as a wingdam later at mouth of Cache Creek.	CSLC, 111
Goliath	July 22, 1879. Schooner. Near Cache Slough confluence or higher on Benicia to Courtland run.	MacMullen
Washoe	September 5, 1864. Blew up engine while racing with Chrysiopolis after leaving Rio Vista, going up into Steamboat Slough. Reports say 50 people were killed. "The explosion of the boilers of the Washoe took place at ten o'clock, at a point just above the Hog's Back, about ten miles above Rio Vista, on her up-trip on Monday night".	The San Francisco Daily Morning Call, Sept 7, 1864
New World	1851. Steamer; ruptured a steam-line while going through Steamboat Slough	MacMullen, page 25
"unknown"	1850. The gold heist. Local papers indicate a steamer with gold bars in her hold was on Steamboat Slough late July and got stuck on a sandbar at the top end of Hog's back Shoal. The crew and few passengers all jumped off before the ship blew up and burned, so no one was killed. When the ship owner returned a day later to collect the contents of the hold it was all gone, assumed to have blown up and burned. (Most who hear this story assume the gold was stolen upriver and then the ship beached and burned to cover their tracks1)	Local records



Pictured: The Chrysy at night on Steamboat Slough; land grant of area around Hogsback Shoal; Hutchings sketch of the Entrance at Steamboat Slough 1862